A portrait by Rembrandt of a woman wearing a large, dark, ruffled hat. She has a thoughtful expression, resting her chin on her hand. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting her face against a dark background.

REMBRANDT'S SOCIAL NETWORK

FAMILY, FRIENDS AND ACQUAINTANCES

REMBRANDT'S SOCIAL NETWORK

FAMILY, FRIENDS AND ACQUAINTANCES

CONTENT

- 10 Foreword
Lidewij de Koekkoek
- 12 Introduction
Epcó Runia
- 14 At Home with Rembrandt
Leonore van Sloten
- 20 Rembrandt's Personal Circle
Epcó Runia

EARLY FRIENDS

- 28 **Jan Lievens**
- 30 **Constantijn Huygens**
- 32 Friends, with Different Networks
Lloyd DeWitt

BLOOD FRIENDS

- 40 **Saskia Uylenburgh**
- 42 **Hendrick Uylenburgh**
- 44 **Jan Cornelisz Sylvius**
- 46 **Titus van Rijn**
- 48 **Hendrickje Stoffels**
- 50 **Karel van der Pluym**
- 52 A Network in Line: Rembrandt's Portrait Etchings
Stephanie Dickey
- 60 'Cousin' Karel van der Pluym and the Benefit of Family
Marieke de Winkel

- 66 **SOCIOGRAM**

ARTIST FRIENDS

- 70 **Gerbrand van den Eeckhout**
- 72 **Roelant Roghman**
- 74 **Philips Koninck**
- 76 **Jan van de Cappelle**
- 78 **Johannes Lutma**
- 80 **Christiaen Dusart**
- 82 **Jeremias de Decker**
- 84** Rembrandt's Artist Friends
Volker Manuth
- 88** Drawing Together Outdoors
David de Witt

CONNOISSEURS

- 100 **Jan Six**
- 102 **Thomas Asselijn**
- 104** Rembrandt in Friendship Books
Judith Noorman
- 112** A Painter Goes to the Rabbi
Jasper Hillegers

FRIENDS IN TIMES OF NEED

- 120 **Lodewijk van Ludick**
- 122 **Pieter de la Tombe**
- 124 **Abraham Francen**
- 126** Rembrandt's True Friends
Maartje Veringa and Epco Runia

- 132** Lenders to the Exhibition
- 134** Notes
- 138** Literature

M

Myne Heer

met een sonderling vermaent hebbe ick u
 een genoesmes misstijck bander is deser doorloep
 kinder daer u goudes ginst ende gemeyent geest
 soo dat ick van gants gemeyent weder oblyfste blyken
 as u rekinen sijn die dienst ende vrien sijn te doen
 soo ist door gemeyent geest tot sijn te gant mijne
 gant be gant dees by gemeyent doorch twee fende
 loopende dat mijnre in dees niet versmaende
 sijn want get is die eerste gedagten
 die ick een mijn jaar lant

Myne heer des ontfangen vanden boogwert is by
 my gannest soo alt ick besing want ^{met} dees
 stincken te parck sij moet die nog eerst reus
 sijn die sijde soo get sijn Hoogheit behoude
 wil mij gant het sijn kant oor die betalinge
 met dees so soude ick een mijn jaar
 versien sijn sijn Hoogheit mij toe heest
 van dit 2 stincken dat het get gant sijn
 in des eerste ontfangen magt
 dat ick me sonderling mede gant
 soude dees vanden sijn sijn op ontfangen

INTRODUCTION

No one can manage without a social network nowadays, but in the seventeenth century it was absolutely essential.¹ If you wanted to start a business, borrow money or needed care in Rembrandt's day, you turned to your friends and relatives. Financial services and care institutions were still in their infancy, so your social network was crucial for survival. The concept of friendship was key. It was all about trust and the principle that friends would not cheat you, something you always had to guard against with strangers. There was a system intended to guarantee confidence as far as possible, a system of reciprocal favours, based on the maxim 'you scratch my back and I'll scratch yours'.

Your social network consisted of friends, a concept used more broadly then than the way we interpret it now. Someone we call a business connection would have been described as a friend in the seventeenth century. Family members were also referred to as friends—'blood friends'. For most people, the family was the most important group in their social network. And then there were 'true friends'. This description was reserved for people whom we would now call our friends. People with whom we share interests and whose company we enjoy. This type of friendship also existed in the seventeenth century.

REMBRANDT'S FRIENDS

In this book we look at Rembrandt's social network—in other words, his 'friends'. We have divided them into five categories: early friends, blood friends, artist friends, connoisseurs and friends in times of need. We present the twenty most important friends in as many 'portraits'. In between, experts describe in ten articles how Rembrandt's social network had an ongoing influence on his life and work.

And what emerges? Rembrandt was not a great networker. While he made a dynamic start and his career initially took off like a rocket, he appears to have gone downhill after the death of his wife Saskia and the completion of the magnificent *Night Watch* in 1642. Rembrandt was then thirty-six. He had fewer contacts with relatives, for a long time he did not accept commissions for portraits and he no longer courted the Amsterdam elite. According to his biographer, Houbraken, in later life Rembrandt sought the company primarily of people

'such as practised art', in other words artists. It also emerges that he had very frequent dealings with connoisseurs and collectors. They lent him money and acted as witnesses during transactions at notaries. In exchange for these favours, Rembrandt sometimes gave them paintings and prints. Rembrandt's most faithful friend, Abraham Francen, whom he trusted enough to make him guardian of his daughter, Cornelia, was also a fanatical art collector. Rembrandt, as we see, primarily chose friends with whom he could share his greatest passion—art.

It is fascinating to see that even a great artist like Rembrandt did not work alone. He was not a solitary genius labouring on his own. His friends supported him commercially, financially and artistically. His nearest and dearest, moreover, inspired him to create a group of dazzling works of art in which he portrayed them quite informally. In short, without his social network Rembrandt would never have been able to create such an impressive oeuvre.

REMBRANDT AS A FRIEND

Rembrandt had a reputation for being tight-fisted and headstrong.² And it has to be said that when it came to paying off loans, he was indeed not very generous.³ Yet if we view the strikingly informal paintings that he made of friends and relatives, we can see that they are very relaxed in his company. They lean back, resting on one arm, talk to him or look cheerfully at him. It seems that Rembrandt would not have been such a bad friend to have.

Epcó Runia

Head of Collections, The Rembrandt House Museum



1. Rembrandt

Portrait of Saskia in Profile, c. 1633-42

Oil on panel, 99.5 x 78.8 cm

Kassel, Museumlandschaft Hessen Kassel

Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister

REMBRANDT'S PERSONAL CIRCLE

If you search Rembrandt's oeuvre for the faces of his family and friends, it will not be long before you have a list of more than thirty paintings. Members of Rembrandt's immediate family top the list. There are, for instance, at least five paintings of his wife, Saskia, seven of his later love, Hendrickje, and no fewer than eight of his son, Titus. Some other members of the family and several of Rembrandt's friends are portrayed once or twice. It is a unique phenomenon in the seventeenth century – an artist who recorded the likenesses of his friends and loved ones so often and usually in a very informal and intimate way. Why did he make these paintings? And what do they tell us about Rembrandt's relationship with the people in his personal circle?

EPCO RUNIA

TRIBUTE

It is by no means always easy to recognize members of Rembrandt's family and his friends in his paintings. Although we have a reasonably good idea of what Saskia looked like, for example, there are still arguments about whether she is or is not pictured in a particular work.¹ An added complication is that Saskia's face was the inspiration for a facial type that Rembrandt often used.² In truth, almost all Rembrandt's ideal women look like Saskia to some extent, without actually being her. Nevertheless, there are five paintings that everyone agrees are of Saskia. He seems to have made some of them as a tribute to his wife; one such is the portrait now in Kassel (fig. 1). It shows Saskia in a magnificent, elaborate fantastical costume of crimson velvet, fur and a spectacular wide-brimmed hat with an ostrich plume. She appears in profile, deep in

thought. The portrait is dignified and restrained, but has great visual richness; it is a distinguished portrait that does justice to Saskia's well-bred origins. As far as Rembrandt was concerned, this painting must have been an important personal project. He worked on it over a period of almost ten years, roughly from when he became engaged to Saskia (1633) until her death (1642) and he always kept the painting in his home.³ It was not until thirteen years later, when he was up to his neck in debt and in urgent need of money, that he sold it to his good friend Jan Six I. Even then, though, Rembrandt could not let it go altogether and he got his pupils to make a free copy of it (see page 41). He kept this copy with him in memory of his great love, whom he had lost so tragically young.



★ 2. Rembrandt

Lighting Study with Hendrickje Stoffels as Model, c. 1659

Oil on panel, 72.5 x 51.5 cm

Frankfurt am Main, Das Städel Museum
(on permanent loan from the BRD)



★ 3. Rembrandt

Portrait of Titus, 1660

Oil on panel, 81.5 x 78.5 cm

Baltimore, The Baltimore Museum of Art
(The Mary Frick Jacobs Collection)

A MODEL TO STUDY

Rembrandt does not appear to have repeated the explicit tribute he made for Saskia for his later love, Hendrickje Stoffels; but, then again, he was not formally married to her. All the same, he made various paintings for which she modelled in which great intimacy is unmistakable. Hendrickje can be identified as a rather stocky woman, with the round forehead and firm cheeks that appear in various drawings and paintings by Rembrandt in the 1650s and early 1660s. One of these paintings is a portrait, but more often than not she served as a model for a mythological figure or other personage.

A painting in Frankfurt that has only recently been reattributed to Rembrandt (fig. 2) is an exception. According to the latest thinking, it is one of a group of paintings that he made as studies into various problems encountered by painters, in this case very unusual lighting. The light comes

not from upper left and from the front, as was customary in the seventeenth century, but directly from the left. As a result, even the shoulder on the right catches something of the incident light. The head is turned to the right, causing an unusual distribution of light and dark areas on the face that Rembrandt wanted to study and record. Hendrickje's loose garment of gleaming silk (highly unusual in Rembrandt's work) supports the idea that he was primarily concerned here with complex lighting effects. Rembrandt needed a model for a study like this, and Hendrickje was evidently around and available. The composition of the painting reinforces this sense of closeness and intimacy. Hendrickje fills the canvas from the waist up, which means that Rembrandt was sitting very close when he painted her. And there is contact between them: he looks at her and she at him.



4. Rembrandt

Portrait of Jan Six, 1654

Oil on canvas, 112 x 102 cm
Amsterdam, Six Collection



5. Rembrandt

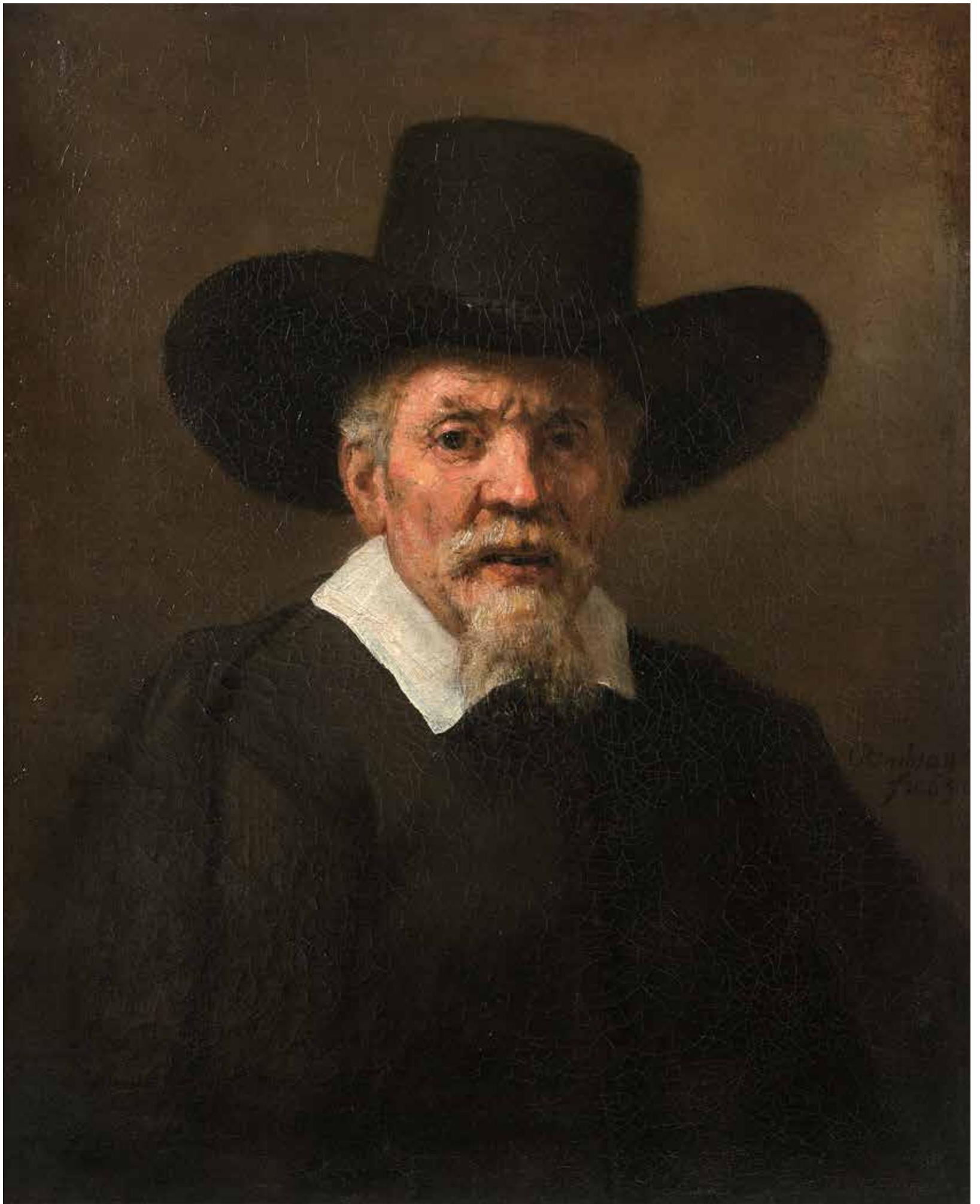
*Portrait of an elderly Man
possibly Pieter de la Tombe, 1667*

Oil on canvas, 81.9 x 67.7 cm
The Hague, Mauritshuis

FATHER AND SON

Titus's role is similar to Hendrickje's: Rembrandt painted his portrait, but more often he appeared as a model for a religious scene or a study. One of the most remarkable images in the series is the painting in which Titus is about nineteen (fig. 3). This is anything but a formal portrait. A smiling Titus sits very informally on a chair, his elbow on the armrest and his chin cupped in his hand. Titus can be identified by his russet curls, large, deep-set eyes and dark, arched eyebrows. His nose is strong with a round tip, and he has a pronounced mouth curling up at the corners. The pressure of the hand has pushed the mouth slightly out of shape – an effect that was keenly observed by Rembrandt and contributes to the casual character of the painting. Rembrandt's painting manner also seems to be exceptionally loose and swift here. He created the shadow on Titus's forehead, for instance, simply by leaving the yellowish-brown ground showing, and put in the light

areas of the face with broad brushstrokes. Halfway through, Rembrandt lowered the position of the thumb slightly; this has now become visible where the paint has been abraded. And finally, it has been discovered that the work was painted on a left-over piece of a much larger canvas, a remnant that was lying around in the studio. The whole thing gives the strong impression that the painting was dashed off quickly and by chance. Perhaps it went like this: Titus strolls into his father's studio for a chat and flops into a chair. Rembrandt decides to make a painting of his son, a study finished in a flash. His aim – to show how well he can convey very specific emotions through pose and facial expression, one of the pre-requisites for a good history painter. It is a study, but he signs the painting anyway, so that it can be sold. The result is more than an extremely original painting – never do you see someone smiling and sitting so nonchalantly with his chin resting on his hand – it is a pictorial document of the relationship between



★ 6. Rembrandt

Portrait of Arnold Tholinx, 1656

Oil on canvas, 76 x 63 cm

Paris, Musée Jacquemart-André

father and son. Titus was relaxed in his father's company. Father and son seem to get on well; they were comfortable with one another.

PORTRAITS FOR FRIENDS

The portraits Rembrandt painted of his friends are often much more informal than the ones he made for official clients. Jan Six I's is not just the most famous, it is the largest and most ambitious (fig. 4). But then, Six was not an ordinary friend; he was a connoisseur of art with a very deep purse. The large size notwithstanding, Six is pictured in a very informal situation, drawing on his gloves as he prepares to go out.

Rembrandt seems to have developed a simpler template for portraits of other friends. These works are smaller, and the sitter is often quite tightly framed so that less of the setting can be seen.⁴ In 1656, for instance, Rembrandt made one such simple portrait of Arnold Tholinx (fig. 6), an eminent physician and the brother-in-law of Rembrandt's friend Jan Six I.⁵ In the same year, Tholinx also commissioned a portrait etching from Rembrandt and must have been a fan of his work. What makes these rather sober friends' portraits so attractive is the concentration on the faces, in which Rembrandt always captured great expressiveness. In this instance, it is as if Tholinx, with his slightly parted lips, simply carried on talking while he was sitting to the artist. The deep frown suggests that this was not an easy conversation, and certainly none too cheerful.

The template of the friend's portrait, particularly the tight framing, can also be identified in the portrait of an elderly man in *The Hague* (fig. 5). The man's identity is unknown, but the painting's understated composition and the unusually informal impression it makes leaves no doubt that he must have been at least a close acquaintance of Rembrandt's. The man sits a little awkwardly in his chair and seems to be seeking support from the armrests with his hands. His collar hangs open and his hat is crooked on his head. Rembrandt used much cheaper, poorer quality materials than usual and made the painting quite hurriedly: the greenish-brown ground is still visible in many places and he scratched away in the

paint with abandon to indicate the hair and other elements. The result is none the worse for it. You get the impression that the man was captured in an unguarded moment, perhaps during a convivial evening with the artist. The mood consequently appears more pleasant than in Tholinx's portrait. Does this also mean that he had a better relationship with Rembrandt? it could be. It has been suggested that the man was the seventy-four-year-old bookseller and art dealer Pieter de la Tombe, who is known to have been one of Rembrandt's best friends and owned a portrait Rembrandt had painted of him 'in his old age'.⁶

REMBRANDT VERSUS RUBENS

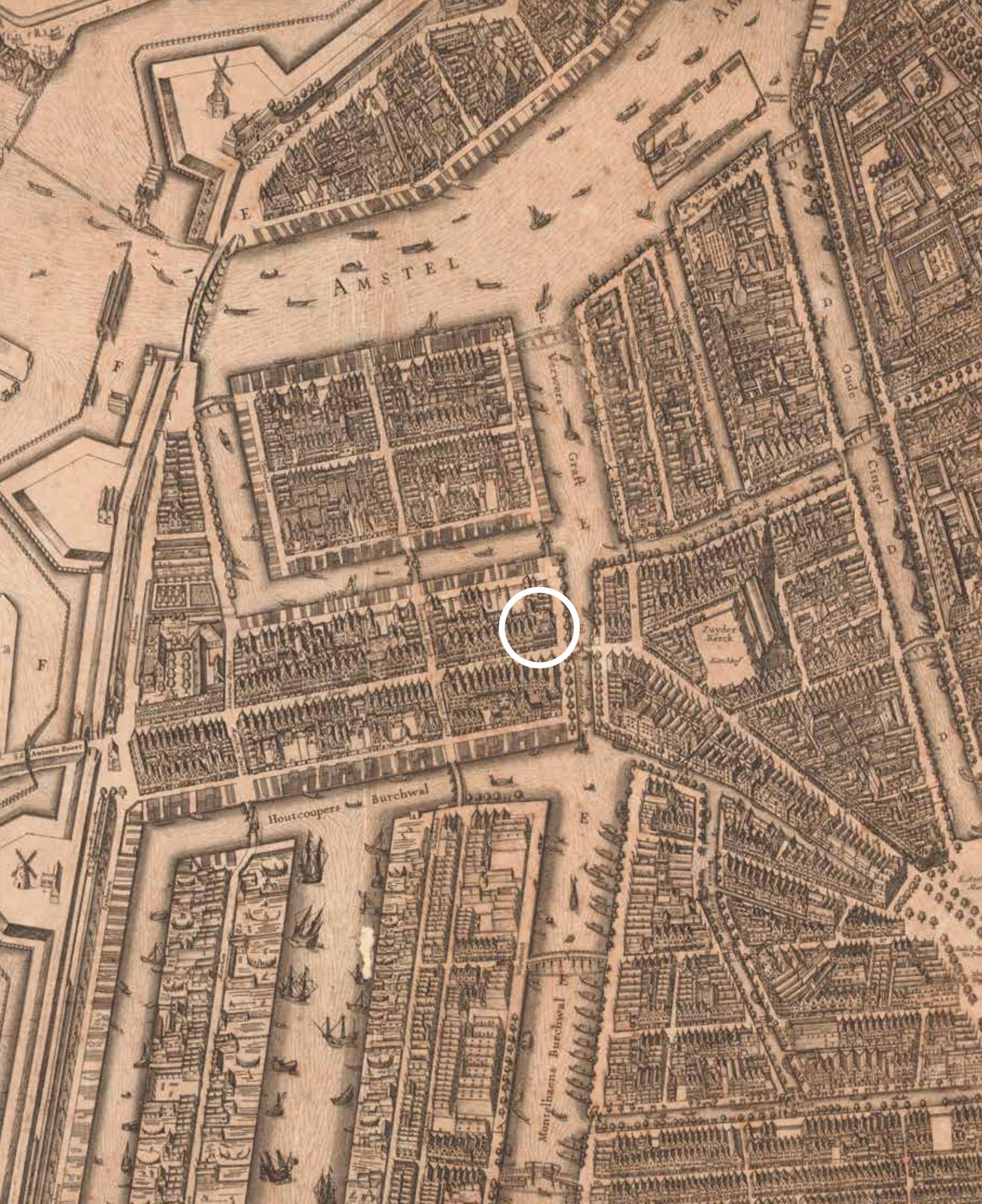
Although painters like Jan Steen and Gerard ter Borch sometimes used their relatives as models, there is only one other artist in the seventeenth century who, like Rembrandt, regularly painted his family and friends. This was Rubens.⁷ It is possible that this earlier Flemish predecessor was actually a source of inspiration for Rembrandt in this respect. However, Rubens's compositions are rather more considered than Rembrandt's and his technique is not as free and sketchy, so that Rembrandt's paintings seem to have come about more spontaneously. Rembrandt had a better sense of the mood of the moment and the sitter's feelings, even when they are not really animated. It is, in short, as if we, the viewers, are let in on the special bond between the artist and his loved ones. And in this, Rembrandt is unique.

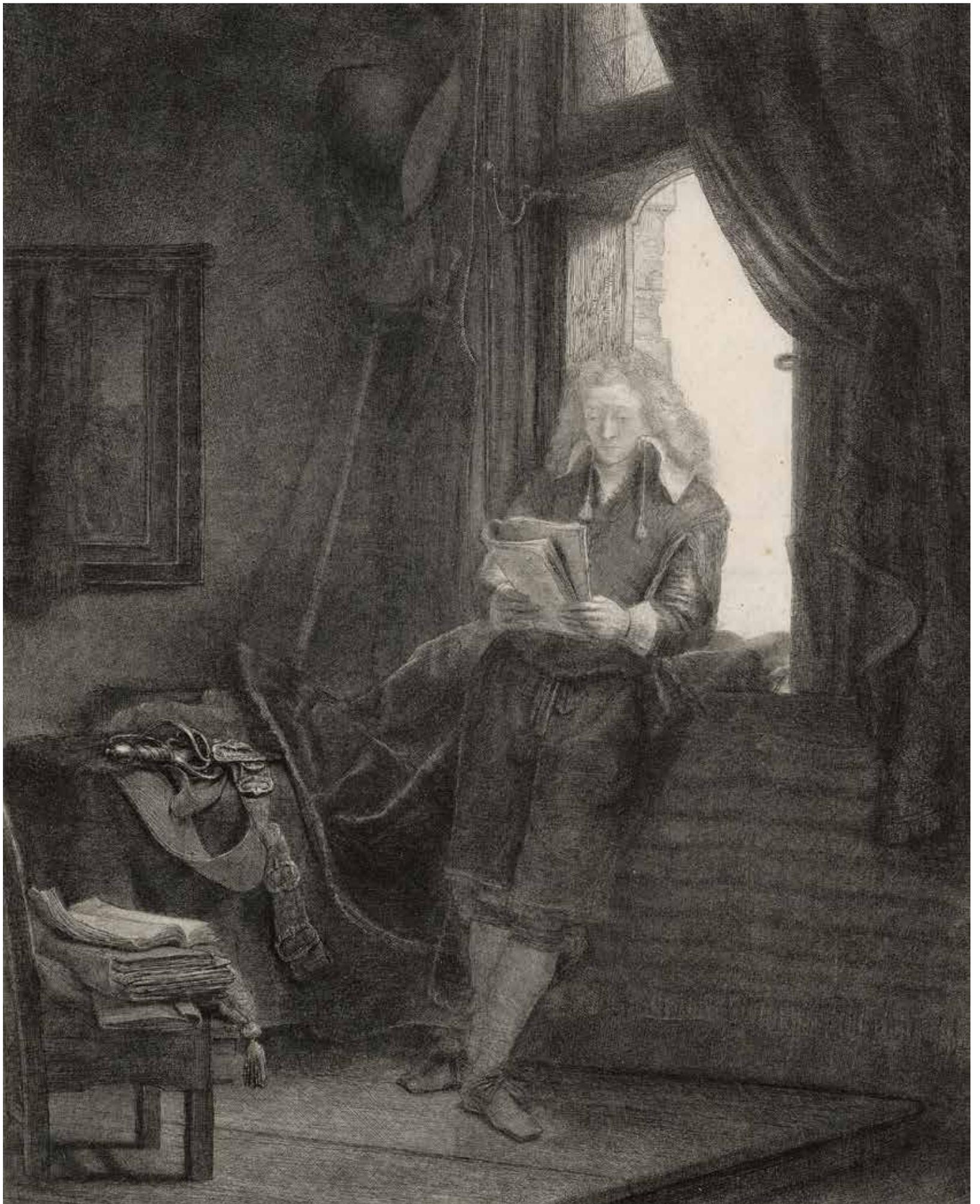
HENDRICK

Like many other art dealers at that time, Hendrick Uylenburgh had trained as a painter. He was the son of a cabinet maker, Gerrit Uylenburgh of Leeuwarden, who worked for the Polish king, Sigismund III.¹ Hendrick received his early art training from his older brother Rombout in Krakow. In 1620 he was working as an agent of the Polish king, importing paintings from Flanders.² Around 1625 he and his family moved to Amsterdam,³ where he took over the house and portrait workshop of the recently deceased painter Cornelis van der Voort in Jodenbreestraat, where many artists were still living.⁴ A Mennonite, he worked closely with fellow believer Lambert Jacobsz in Leeuwarden.

In 1631 Rembrandt invested in Uylenburgh's business, and was commissioned by him to paint portraits. Rembrandt moved in with Uylenburgh, and in 1634 they both contributed to Burchard Grossman's album amicorum.⁵ Uylenburgh had contacts with his family members from Friesland who belonged to the Reformed Church, and in 1633 he probably introduced his cousin Saskia to Rembrandt; they married a year later. When Rembrandt began to work independently in 1635, it appears that there was a breach between Rembrandt and Uylenburgh.⁶ With Govert Flinck as Rembrandt's replacement, Uylenburgh moved to premises further along Jodenbreestraat, and later to Dam Square. Strangely enough, no portrait of Hendrick Uylenburgh, the owner of a 'portrait factory', is known.

Detail of the map of Amsterdam showing Jodenbreestraat, where Uylenburgh and Rembrandt lived, 1647.





★ 1. Rembrandt

Portrait of Jan Six, 1647

Etching, drypoint and burin, state IV(4)

245 x 191 mm

Amsterdam, The Rembrandt House Museum

A NETWORK IN LINE: REMBRANDT'S PORTRAIT ETCHINGS

Between 1635 and 1665, Rembrandt etched the portraits of at least sixteen individuals in addition to himself and his wife Saskia.¹ Some of these portraits must have been commissioned, but others may have been gestures of gratitude or friendship. It is remarkable that nearly all the sitters belonged to Rembrandt's social network, or at least had other dealings with him. Where did they come from, the people who sat for Rembrandt's etchings? How did they know Rembrandt and what are their relationships with one another?

STEPHANIE S. DICKEY

A PORTRAIT ETCHING IN PAYMENT

There is just one surviving document that mentions a commission for an etched portrait. It is a notarial deed of 25 December 1655 laying down the conditions for paying for a house Rembrandt wanted to buy. Faced with mounting debts, Rembrandt was making plans to move out of his home in Jodenbreestraat (now The Rembrandt House Museum) to less expensive quarters. He had found a house closer to the city centre in Handboogstraat (no. 5). The purchase price of the house, 7,000 guilders, was to be covered by a loan of 4,000 guilders plus artworks valued at 3,000 guilders. The document was witnessed by the apothecary and art collector Abraham Francen, the art dealer Lodewijk van Ludick and the poet Thomas Asselijn. The appraisal lists paintings and prints by Rembrandt himself and paintings by the genre painter Adriaen

Brouwer and the landscapist Jan Porcellis. In addition, Rembrandt was to undertake a new commission: 'a portrait of Otto van Cattenburgh which the aforementioned van Rijn shall etch from life, equal in quality to his portrait of Mr Jan Six, for the sum of 400 guilders.'² The valuation of 400 guilders for a portrait plate was exceptional: in the same document, six paintings by Brouwer and Porcellis totalled only 750 guilders. Although this deal was never finalized (Rembrandt later moved to Rozengracht), it opens a fascinating window into a social network in which business, friendship and art overlapped.

REMBRANDT PORTRAYS HIS FRIENDS

The document mentions four of Rembrandt's friends: Abraham Francen, Lodewijk van Ludick, Thomas Asselijn and

This book is published to accompany the exhibition *Rembrandt's Social Network: Family, Friends and Acquaintances* in The Rembrandt House Museum, Amsterdam, 1 February through 29 May 2019

Edition

WBOOKS, Zwolle, The Netherlands
info@wbooks.com
www.wbooks.com
In collaboration with
The Rembrandt House Museum
info@rembrandthuis.nl
www.rembrandthuis.nl

Editors

Epcó Runia
David de Witt

Text

Lloyd DeWitt
Stephanie Dickey
Jasper Hillegers
Volker Manuth
Judith Noorman
Epcó Runia
Leonore van Sloten (including the 'portrait' of Huygens)
Maartje Veringa
Marieke de Winkel
David de Witt (including the other 'portraits')

Translation Dutch - English

Lynne Richards

Copy Editing

Nathalie Maciesza
Epcó Runia

Design

Marinka Reuten, Amsterdam

Photography

Pages 14-18 Kirsten van Santen

© 2019 WBOOKS Zwolle

All rights reserved. Nothing from this publication may be reproduced, multiplied, stored in an electronic data file, or made public in any form or in any manner, be it electronic, mechanical, through photocopying, recording or in any other way, without the advance written permission of the publisher.

The publisher has endeavoured to settle image rights in accordance with legal requirements. Any party who nevertheless deems they have a claim to certain rights may apply to the publisher.

Copyright of the work of artists affiliated with a CISAC organisation has been arranged with Pictoright of Amsterdam.

© c/o Pictoright Amsterdam 2019.

ISBN 978 94 625 8314 6 (Dutch edition)
ISBN 978 94 625 8325 2 (English edition)
NUR 646



Rembrandt
Portrait of Abraham Francen, c. 1657
Etching, drypoint and burin
state II(12), 159 x 210 mm
Amsterdam, Amsterdam Museum

Rembrandt seems to have been an artist who took little notice of other people. Yet he had a family, friends and acquaintances who helped him, bought his art, lent him money, challenged him artistically and inspired him. He would never have become such a great artist without his social network. This book explores that network: Rembrandt's early friends, family members ('blood friends'), artist friends, the connoisseurs who supported him and his friends in times of need.

As a friend, Rembrandt went his own way. He made little effort to get on with the elite, and preferred to surround himself with people who understood art. He had strong ties with them, as he did with the members of his family. He portrayed them in remarkably informal paintings and prints, works that bring Rembrandt's private world to life.

Front cover:

Rembrandt

Portrait of Titus, c. 1660

Oil on canvas, 81.3 x 68.7 cm

Baltimore, The Baltimore Museum of Art

(The Mary Frick Jacobs Collection)

